

WE CLAIM:

1. A computer-readable medium, having computer-executable components, comprising:
 - a data structure including variable/value mappings;
 - a pathname resolver configured to identify a variable in a pathname, to retrieve from the data structure a value associated with the identified variable, and to modify the pathname such that the variable is replaced with the value from the data structure.
2. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the pathname resolver comprises a variable identifier that is configured to identify the variable in the pathname.
3. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the pathname resolver comprises a pathname engine that is configured to identify the variable by performing the following steps:
 - searching for the variable in the data structure;
 - accessing the corresponding value; and
 - inserting the value in place of the variable in the pathname such that the path identifies the location of an object.
4. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the data structure is implemented in a kernel mode of an operating system.
5. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein variable/value pairs are defined in the data structure by a user.
6. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein variable/value pairs are defined in the data structure by a context in which the computer-readable medium operates.

7. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions comprising:
receiving a pathname that includes a variable;
resolving the pathname by mapping the variable to a corresponding value in a data structure;
returning a handle to an object pointed to by the resolved pathname; and
expanding the data structure by adding variable/value pairs to the data structure.

8. *The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions of claim 7, further comprising identifying the variable in the pathname.*

9. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions of claim 8, further comprising searching for the variable in a data structure implemented in the kernel of an operating system.

10. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions of claim 9, further comprising inserting the value corresponding to the variable in place of the variable in the pathname.

11. A computer-readable medium encoded with an extensible data structure comprising:

a first field including an identification of a variable included in a pathname; and

a second field including a value for the variable, the pathname including the value being operable to point to an object.

12. The computer-readable medium encoded with an extensible data structure of claim 11, wherein the data structure is stored in the kernel of an operating system.

13. The computer-readable medium encoded with an extensible data structure of claim 11, wherein the data structure is expandable by adding variable/value pairs.
14. A computer-implemented method, comprising:
identifying a variable in a pathname provided by a component requesting access to an object;
mapping the variable to a corresponding value in a data structure;
modifying the pathname by replacing the variable in the pathname with the corresponding value such that the resolved pathname creates a path that points to the object; and
returning to the requesting component the modified pathname.
15. The computer-implemented method of claim 14, further comprising receiving a pathname that includes a variable.
16. The computer-implemented method for resolving a pathname of claim 14, further comprising searching for the variable in the data structure implemented in the kernel of an operating system.
17. A computer-readable medium with computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 14.